



# HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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## Interoperability Montana Retreat

By E. Wing Spooner [espooner@mt.gov](mailto:espooner@mt.gov)

On April 24 and 25, the Interoperability Montana (IM) Project sponsored a well-attended retreat to better inform stakeholders and solicit their ideas for moving the project forward. It also provided an opportunity to recognize some significant contributors to the project.

Bob Anez, Dept. of Corrections Public Information Officer, presented awards to Bob McWilliams, IMTC Chair, Roger Smith, Montana Highway Patrol, and Kevin Bruski, Montana Dept. of Transportation, to recognize their significant efforts in the build-out of the IM system. Tim Burton, Helena City Manager and Dave Nielsen, Helena City Attorney, were recognized for their considerable work in creating the IM Interlocal Agreement and helping to establish the governance for the IM Project. Don Brostrom, Hill County Undersheriff, was recognized for his role as the first chair of the IM Technical Committee. Finally, Lewis and Clark County Sheriff Cheryl Liedle was honored for the important work she achieved while serving as the first IMPD Chair.

The event began with a simulated Jeopardy game. Questions and answers were based on the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP) (located at <http://interop.mt.gov>). Erin Lee, National Governor's Assoc., moderated a panel presentation that featured Cindy Mullaney, Flathead County Deputy Director of the Office of Emergency Services, who gave a presentation about the history of the IM Project and IMPD Chair Alan Michaels, Glendive Police Chief, who explained the IM Project's governance. Bob Murdo, IM Legal Counsel, provided an update on the project's legal status, and Butte-Silver Bow Sheriff John Walsh gave an overview of the finance structure.

Bob McWilliams, Roger Smith, and Kevin Bruski addressed the technical build out of the project, with descriptions of the network, before and after photos of communications sites, and an interactive map that illustrated the progress of the IM Project. Micah Applewhite and Mark Canton, Motorola, gave an excellent presentation on the features of trunking. Bob Anez then shared ideas for creating my public awareness about the IM Project.

On Thursday evening a reception and dinner were held. Dawson County Commissioner Jim Skillestad and Sheriff Liedle gave success-story

presentations, and State of Montana Chief Information Officer Dick Clark presented the keynote address. He emphasized Montana's four-fold mission for public safety communications, which include local needs, such as an ambulance responding to an emergency, state needs, such as communicating during wild fires, national needs such as drug interdiction and international communication needs in regards to the Canadian border and illegal immigration.

At the Friday morning opening session, Tom Lawless, Chief, Multi-Jurisdictional Communications Services, Office of Emergency Communications, Department of Homeland Security in Washington D.C. gave details on initiatives that his office is working on, including leveraging SCIP implementation with future technical assistance offerings from his office, developing a National Emergency Communications Plan (NECP), and implementing the new Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program (IECGP), which will provide up to \$1.6 billion in funding between FY2008-2012. About \$50 million is expected to be funded in FY2008, which will be directed toward establishing interoperability coordinators in every State and territory, developing and improving SOPs, programming radios with national interoperability channels, implementing Common Channel Naming and plain language, and enhancing state governance structures. Grants for FY 2008 will be awarded by September 30. Up to \$400 million is expected to be grant each year FY09-12.

Breakout sessions facilitated by National Governor's Association (NGA) facilitators, Erin Lee, Will Ware and David Henry solicited ideas about the Role of Consortia and their members, Outreach, and Long-term Maintenance and Funding.

Sponsors are too numerous to list here, but special thanks need to go to BNSF Railway, Harris-Stratex Networks, Northrop Grumman, Motorola, Timberline Communications, Dunne Communications and Montana DES.

## Mobile Data Terminal Consortium Meeting

By Scott Bradford [sbradford@mt.gov](mailto:sbradford@mt.gov)

The Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) Consortium held its monthly meeting in Bozeman on Monday, April 28. The primary business was the review of funding that was initially set aside for mobile data infrastructure and data units from the Community



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Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant awarded to the State of Montana on behalf of the Interoperability Montana Project.

Scott Bradford, PSSB, presented a review of the grant requirements and proposal language. Approximately \$1.1 million dollars is available. The original proposal called for deployment of a new 700 MHz wideband system and expansion of mobile data capability into areas of the Northern Tier not currently having this service. The MDT consortium may request adjustments to the proposal and plan, but these will need to be reviewed and approved by the Department of Justice prior to initiation.

Chairman Jim Cashell appointed a sub-committee to meet prior to May 6 to develop a plan for this grant and lay the groundwork for future development. The sub-committee will report the results to the full consortium at the June meeting.

## Tri-County Interoperable Consortium Meeting

By Pete Mohan [pmohan@mt.gov](mailto:pmohan@mt.gov)

The Tri-County Interoperable Consortium (SWIP/Tri-County) meeting was conducted on May 1 at the Dive Café in Helena. Vice Chair Bill Fleiner oversaw the meeting. The minutes from the March meeting were approved as presented.

Consortium members discussed the Bull Mountain, Boulder Hill, Grassy Mountain, and Limestone communications sites and how the sites tie in to other consortia and partnership agencies within the Interoperability Montana Project. The group also discussed the methodology of coordinating requested grants with existing grants and county and state funding to provide improved consideration by the technical committee. Tom Smith, Northrop Grumman, submitted site reports, and members discussed them.

The consortium has completed interim narrow banding frequency licensing. Programming and installation efforts are on track. The consortium's Assistance to Fire Fighters grant has been received at FEMA. Sally Buckles, DES Coordinator

for Jefferson County, reported on the Interoperability Montana Retreat April 24 and 25 in Billings, MT.

The next meeting will be on May 28 at 10:00 am at the Department of Corrections Conference Room, located behind 515 S. Sanders in Helena.

## Upcoming Meetings

### May 5

IM Finance Sub-Committee

Helena • 9:00 to noon

Anderson and Zurmuehlen (AZ), 828 Great Northern Blvd.

### May 5

IM Governance Committee • Helena • 12:30 to 5:00

State Capitol

### May 6

IM Project Directors (IMPD)

Helena • 9:00 to 3:00 pm

State Capitol

### May 7

Fleet Mapping Sub-Committee

Helena • 9:00 am

Law Enforcement Center, 221 Breckenridge

### May 14 (Please Note Date Change)

Central Montana Consortium (CMICC)

Great Falls • 10:00 am • Wheat Building, 750 6th Street SW

### May 14

South Central Montana Consortium (SCMIC)

Ennis • 10:00 am

First Madison Valley Bank, 213 East Main

### May 15

Saskatchewan Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group Regional Mtg.

Saskatoon • 9:00 a.m. to noon (Central Time)

Radisson Hotel, 405 20th Street East

[CITIGForum@cprc.org](mailto:CITIGForum@cprc.org) - Send an e-mail if interested.

### May 19

IM Technical Committee (IMTC) Meeting

Helena • 9:00 am

Room 317, State Capitol

### May 20

Western Interoperability Comm. Consortium (WICC)

Polson • 10:00 am

DES Offices, Lake County Courthouse, 106 4th Ave. E.

### June 11

Statewide Interoperable Executive Council (SIEC)

Helena • 10:00 am • Location to be announced

### June 16

Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) Consortium

Bozeman • 10:00 am

Best Western City Center Motel, 507 W Main St.